



**Preventing
Malnutrition**

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A child who does not get enough nutrition becomes unhealthy. This also affects the child's growth, academic performance and other activities. Adopting the correct feeding practices and taking a bit of extra care can help to reduce malnutrition.

This booklet tells you how.



A mother should begin breastfeeding within an hour after her baby is born, even before the placenta is expelled. This helps in delivering the placenta, reducing the risk of excessive bleeding after delivery, early secretion of breastmilk and keeping the baby warm. It also helps mother and baby develop a close emotional bond.

The first milk (colostrum) protects the newborn from diseases.





Exclusive Breastfeeding

Until the baby is six months old, give only breastmilk and nothing else. Breastmilk contains all the nutrients that a baby needs.

Even plain water need not and should not be given. Breastmilk contains all the water needed.



After 6 months



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Complementary Foods

Breastfeeding should continue till about the age of two. But once the baby is six months old, she/he needs other foods in addition to breastmilk.

Complementary foods should be of the right consistency, quantity, frequency, density and variety.

Initially, a baby can be given mashed foods, such as mashed vegetables, banana, mashed rice and dal. Slowly, the amount of such foods should be increased.





A child is one-fifth the size of it's parents but needs half as much food .

A child's stomach is small hence feed the child at frequent intervals - over 5 or 6 times a day.

Also give foods that have high energy packed in small volume. That means any fat or oil - like in meat or eggs or in butter or just any edible cooking oil.





A child can eat the same kind of food as an adult, with less spice. It is not necessary to give a child tonics and health drinks. Often these are expensive and do not help the child at all.

Vegetables, fruits, milk, eggs, meat and pulses are foods that should be given to a child. The greener or redder the vegetables the healthier for the child.



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A child who falls ill frequently is in danger of being malnourished. But by taking some simple preventive measures, common illnesses can be avoided.



Hands should be washed before the child's meals are prepared; before and after the child is fed; and after cleaning the child when she/he passes stools.





Impure water is a major cause of illness.
Boiling water helps to kill the germs that
cause disease.





Immunisation can protect children from several illnesses like **TB**, polio, diphtheria, tetanus, whooping cough and measles.

From the ninth month onwards, a child should be given Vitamin A injections every six months until the child is five years old. This protects the child from infections.





A child should be kept away from people who are ill, especially those who have a cough or cold.

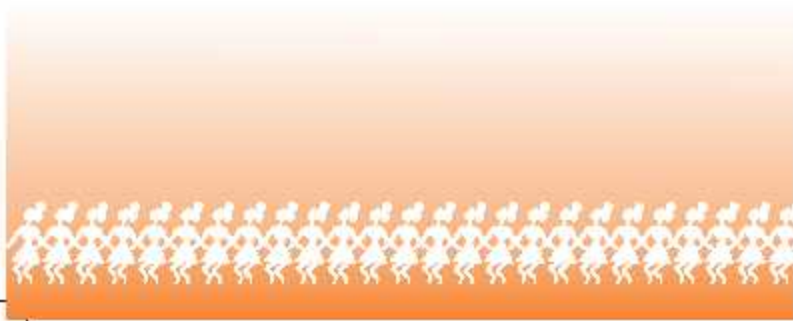
If the mother is ill, she should be careful to wash her hands before touching or feeding the child.





Malaria is a major cause of malnutrition. So children, especially those in areas where malaria is prevalent, should be protected with a mosquito net that has been treated with insecticide. Also dress in loose clothes that cover most of the body.





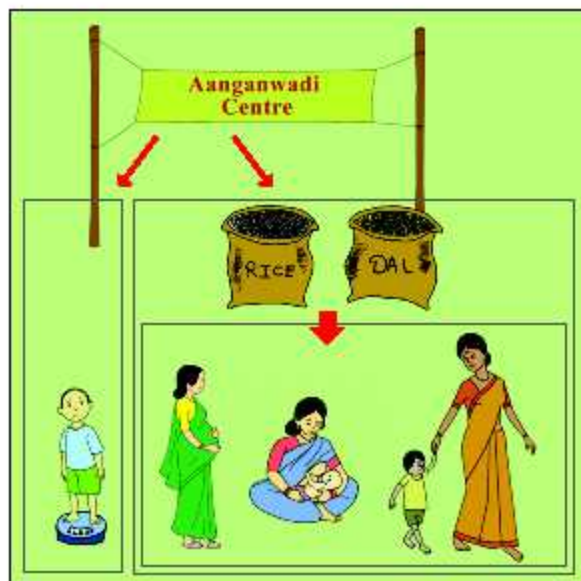
Despite these measures, a child may occasionally fall ill. If this happens, seek treatment as soon as possible. The ASHA can help parents treat minor illnesses with home remedies. Seek a doctor's help if the illness is serious.





The child should be fed properly even when ill. Once the child feels better, provide extra food to recover fully.





Anganwadi Services

A child should be taken to the anganwadi centre regularly to be weighed and checked for malnutrition.

Food supplements are also available at the centre. These may be in the form of cooked meals or take-home rations. These supplements are available to all children up to the age of 5, as well as for pregnant women and lactating mothers.





Love and care

The child needs the time, attention of the family, the love of her parents, siblings and other relatives. A child whose parents play with her/him and spend time feeding her/him with love, eats better. Such a child will also be emotionally secure and more healthy.

It might sometimes be difficult for a mother to find time to feed and play with the child. But if everyone in the family helps it can be managed.





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